

184 Art militaire, n° 5

LECTURE

"MOBILISATION"

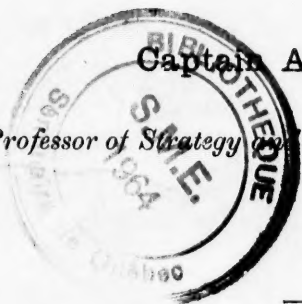
OR

"How to enable the Canadian Militia to take the Field."

BY

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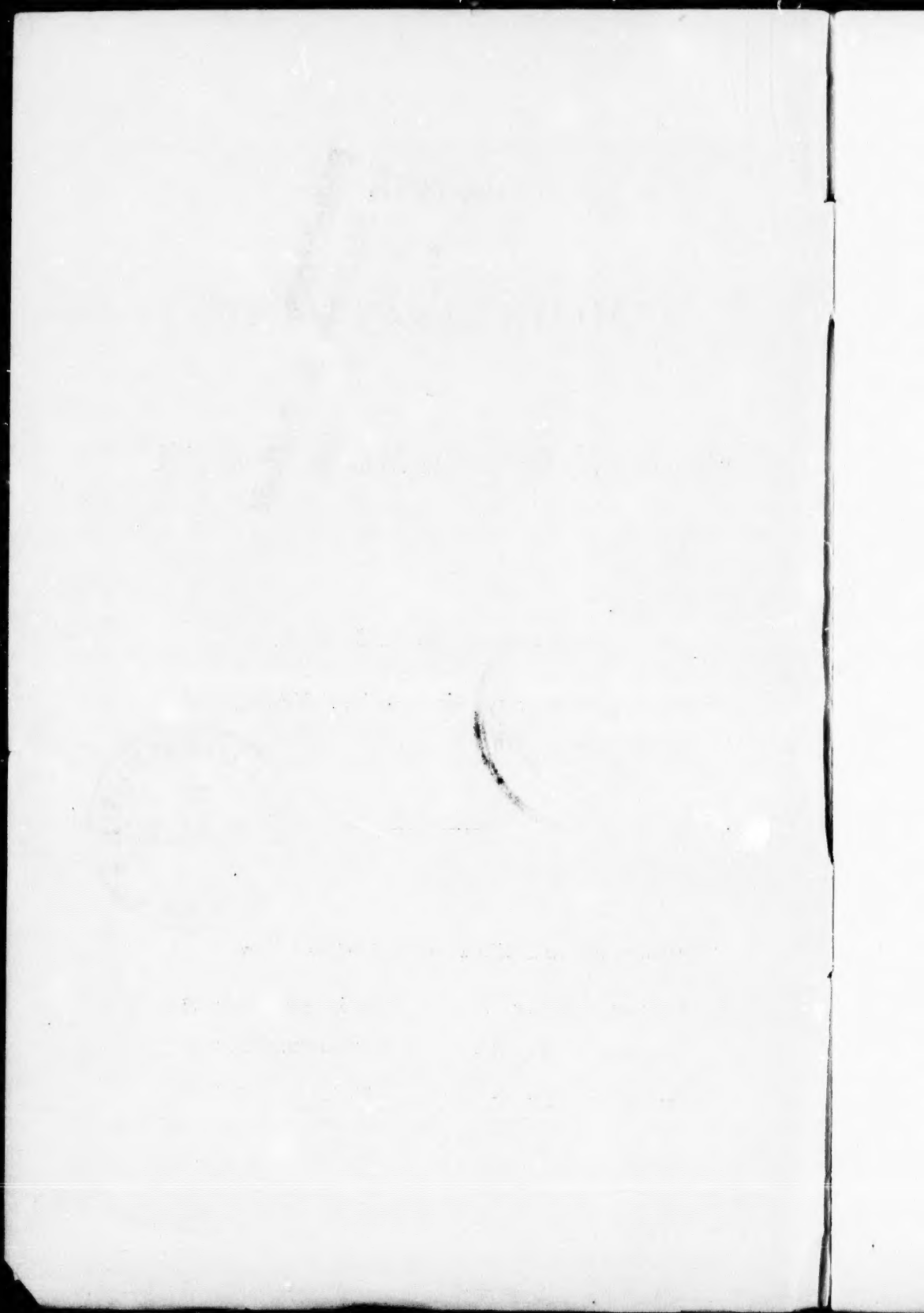


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Delivered at Autumn Militia Camps, 1896, as follows :—

LONDON,	SEPT. 17.	ST. JOHN'S,	SEPT. 23.
NIAGARA,	SEPT. 18.	LAPRAIRIE,	SEPT. 24.
KINGSTON,	SEPT. 21.	LEVIS,	SEPT. 25.



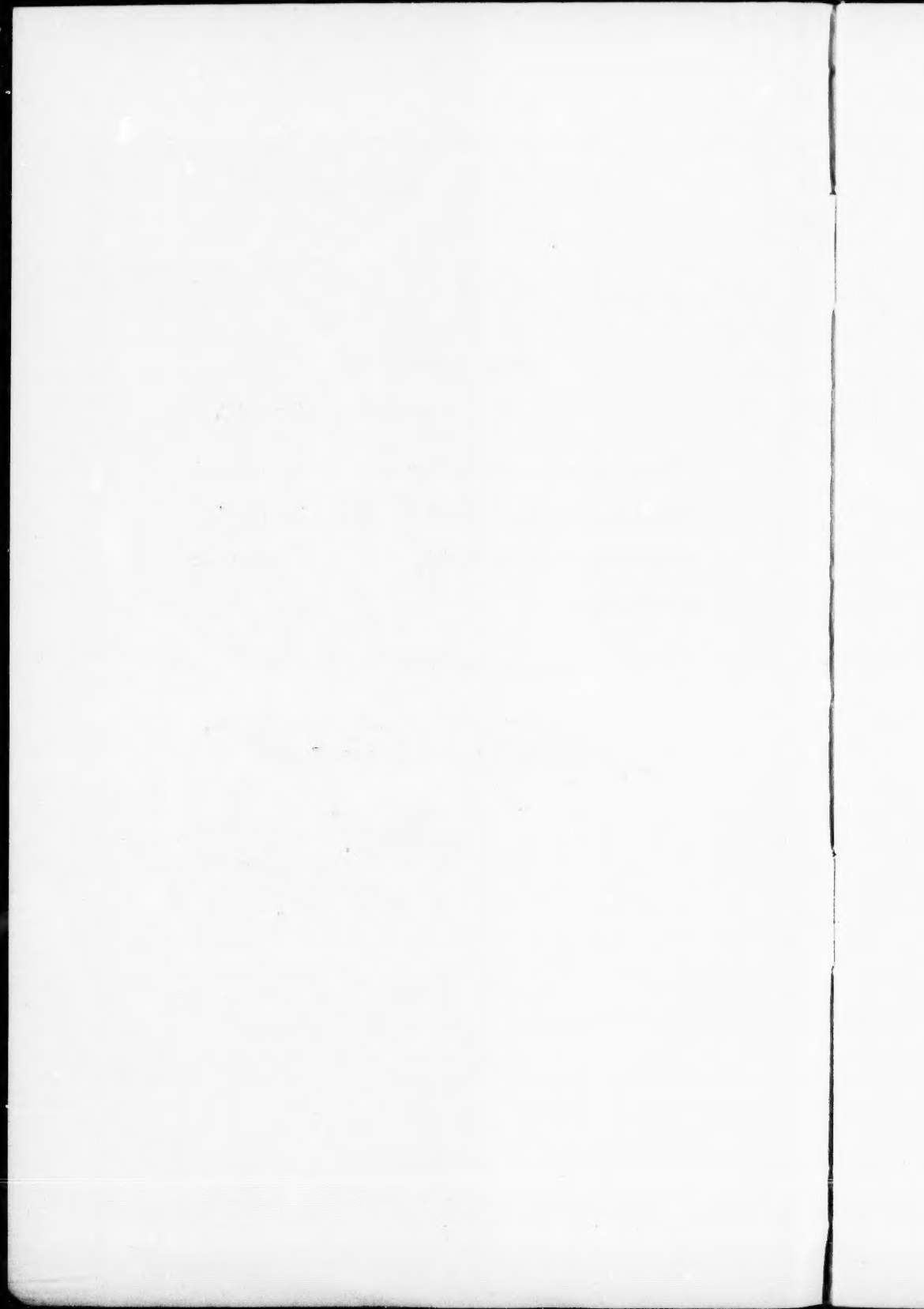
HEAD-QUARTERS,

OTTAWA, 24th October, 1896.

This lecture is printed by order of the General
Officer Commanding the Militia, for the information
of such officers of the Militia as were not present at
its delivery.

By order,

M. J. M. J.
Col.
A. G.



"MOBILISATION"

OR

"HOW TO ENABLE THE CANADIAN MILITIA TO TAKE THE FIELD."

The "Active Militia" of Canada, some 35,000 strong, is undeniably as fine a body of men as can be found anywhere in the world, and it contains within itself an enormous warlike potential—if only that power can be given full scope and be directed to the best advantage.

Mere numbers and ill-directed valour are, however, of little avail in modern warfare, and science has long since taken the place of mere brute force.

To use a homely illustration, a lever has in itself no special strength or virtue, but when *properly applied* and *scientifically handled* it can overcome the resistance of masses infinitely weightier than itself.

So with modern armies. Science, and a clear perception of how to make the very most of the forces at one's disposal, are absolutely essential to success.

The shorter and weaker the lever, the more scientifically it has to be applied; and the smaller and weaker the army the more essential becomes the utmost development of its powers. And few will be disposed to deny that the present strength of the Active Militia would be found uncomfortably small if Canada were unhappily engaged in the defence of her enormous frontier.

But, granting our slender numbers, we can no longer fall back upon the excuse of bad workmen and complain of our tools, for we have the finest of material in the way of *men*, and, thanks to the little New Year's greeting that our worthy cousins across the line thought fit to send us, we have—or shall shortly have—the very best that science can produce in the way of arms and equipment.

So the time has come, I think, for the Militia to take itself more seriously, and to really *consider how it would prepare itself for war*, if such an unpleasant, but always possible, contingency should arise.

In more precise and technical language, the problem of "Mobilisation for War," must be thoroughly worked out, and be universally understood.

"Mobilisation" is the name given to the process by which an army is made *moveable*, and rendered capable of taking the field against an enemy.

As you know, the military forces of a country, in peace time, are made up of a number of separate units :—regiments of cavalry, batteries of artillery, battalions of infantry and so on. These are scattered all over the country and have no connection with each other, they are kept at peace strength in men and stores, they keep no camp equipment or transport in their possession, and in no sense can they be said to be ready for active service.

To enable any one of these units to take the field as a fighting body the following steps have to be taken :—

- (1.) To fill up to war strength in men and horses.
- (2.) To receive and issue to these, arms, clothing, saddlery, &c.
- (3.) To obtain camp equipment, ammunition, and other war stores.
- (4.) To obtain the necessary transport for the above.

This accomplished, the various units have to be organized into war formations, such as brigades, divisions, army corps, etc., and under this head has to be included the organisation of such important items as the transport, supply, medical, and ordnance store services.

All the above forms the indispensable preliminary, and very backbone of any strategic scheme of operations, and demands the most elaborate and arduous preparations in time of peace. And I particularly wish to impress upon you that the working out of a scheme of mobilisation is essentially a task for *peace time*, and as we are now, I rejoice to say, revelling in unclouded peace, the moment is especially suitable for attacking and mastering this vitally important problem.

In case there should be any sceptics present, who may suspect that I am laying undue stress on the importance of mobilisation, I venture to support my contention by an appeal to recent history. There is nothing more convincing than history, and no more

striking proof can be produced than that afforded by the opening events of the great Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

I do not wish to go deeply into the history of this war, but we all know that the French were the aggressors, and, confident in their ability to win, provoked the war with light hearts.

We may also remember how the French Minister of War reported confidently and gaily that the French Armies were ready "down to the last button on the last man's gaiter," when, figuratively speaking, not even the first man had any gaiters at all.

However, in July, 1870, the cry throughout France was "On to Berlin," and the immediate advance of the French armies across the Rhine and into Germany was confidently expected not only by the French themselves but also by the rest of Europe.

But it soon became evident that for the previous few years France had been steadily provoking the conflict and taking no steps to prepare for it—whilst Germany had as steadily been striving for peace, but at the same time perfecting her military organisation and making the completest preparations for the great struggle, in case it should become inevitable.

The French plan of invasion, to be successful, necessitated the French armies being ready to move several days before the enemy, and it was confidently expected that this would be attained by *greater rapidity in mobilisation*.

And yet what was the true condition of the French army at this crisis?

No one will deny that it consisted of brave men, but they were ill-trained, ill-disciplined, and ill-led.

One third of the officers had risen from the ranks, and political influence, the greatest curse that any military force can have to contend with, had filled most of the higher ranks with worthless place-seekers.

The General Staff was ignorant, and contemptuous of its enemy, this last always a bad fault.

There was no clothing, equipment, or arms ready for the reserves, and owing to the fundamental error of "*over-centralisation*" the great depots were hopelessly blocked, and a proper distribution of even such stores as were available became impossible.

There was an absolute lack of system and organisation, and at the outbreak of hostilities almost two thirds of the regiments found themselves at a distance

from their depots and their mobilisation hampered at every turn.

There was a pitiable lack of transport, and the wagons necessary for mobilisation, being accumulated only at the great depots, retarded the mobilisation of the army for several weeks by the lateness of their arrival.

The railways also were used without order or method and endless confusion resulted. The roads were blocked, troops were sent to the wrong concentration places and were wandering aimlessly over the country; reserve men kept pouring in, some without uniform, some without arms, and horses, wagons, and staff were all wanting. The artillery was short of reserve ammunition; the Supply Department, never properly organised, was in a condition of paralysis, and the troops were soon actually starving; maps were served out to the officers, but maps of Germany only which country none of the French ever saw except as prisoners; and the universal confusion and total unpreparedness for war soon became so obvious that all idea of any forward movement had to be abandoned.

So much for the *French* mobilisation!

Let us contrast with it the German arrangements.

Besides the preparation of comprehensive strategic plans to meet any possible action on the part of the French, a vast and elaborate mobilisation scheme had been drawn up years before by Von Moltke, and was now put into operation with unerring certainty and smoothness.

Both officers and men were well equipped and highly trained, and the staff was thoroughly competent.

The German system, in contrast to the French, was essentially one of *de-centralisation*, and each army corps was assembled simultaneously in its own territorial district, complete in men and stores, and with its own staff.

Each corps, when ready to advance, was then moved to the frontier by its own separate line of railway, and this same railway was afterwards used to bring up supplies, re-inforcements &c., direct to the corps from its own home district.

Thus the burden of supplying the armies was distributed over the whole of Germany and the strain was very light in consequence.

In France, on the other hand, the supplies had all been collected in a few great depots, and whilst the French railways were scenes of hopeless disorder, obstruction and purposeless movements, those of Germany were acting with the unity and certainty of full rivers flowing onward to the sea.

To give an idea of the minuteness of the German preparations, I may state that time-tables indicating the day and hour for the departure and arrival of every regiment had been drawn up years before, and when war was declared all that was necessary to set the immense machine in motion was the telegraphing to each military centre of the one word "Mobilise."

And the result showed the perfection of the German plans, for in exactly *one week* the mobilisation of the vast host of nearly half a million men was complete in every detail, and in seventeen days from the declaration of war the three great German armies were actually concentrated, across the Rhine, and ready to advance into French territory.

What followed is well known—the absolute downfall of a mighty nation—and the French paid dearly for their over-confidence and lack of preparation.

And the moral is obvious. *In modern warfare a campaign cannot be rapidly opened or pushed to a successful conclusion, unless complete mobilisation schemes and plans of operation are drawn up and practised beforehand.*

Having thus, I hope, impressed upon you the vital importance of this question of mobilisation, and indicated roughly what it implies, let us now turn to the consideration of our *own* needs, and consider step by step how we should set about mobilising our own little army—"The Active Militia" of Canada.

The foundation of any scheme of mobilisation is of course the strategic scheme of operations which it is proposed to undertake in case of war.

Such strategic schemes are drawn up to meet all possible contingencies, such as the defence of important points along one's own frontier, or contemplated invasions of the enemy's territory.

For obvious reasons, however, all such schemes must be kept strictly secret and be known only to the chief military advisers of the Government, but in any scheme of operations the mobilisation *principles* will be the same, and we can discuss the general course of procedure quite efficiently without pre-supposing any particular emergency.

The main idea is that in any given strategic scheme the Militia available is divided up into divisions, brigades, garrisons or detachments, each with a definitely allotted place of concentration, and that these divisions, brigades, etc., will be collected at their respective concentration stations as rapidly as possible, there to be welded into perfect shape, complete with staff, equipment and transport, ready to meet the enemy as soon as may be necessary.

But before this main distribution, or rather collection, can be arrived at, a vast amount of work has to be done.

Our squadrons, batteries, and battalions are scattered all over the country, and though they would be moved about as little as possible, they have, anyhow, to be collected in one or two big centres, and this speedily and without fuss or confusion.

The great question for us to consider, therefore, is *how can this best be done?*

I will endeavour to give you the outlines (and I regret that time will permit of nothing beyond outlines), of a plan which is in general accordance with the latest European ideas, though modified to suit Canadian conditions. You are all, however, probably far more familiar with these local conditions than I am, and therefore I only offer my opinions for what they are worth and am particularly anxious that, as soon as the lecture is over, any officer shall criticise any point that strikes him as unworkable, or ask any questions, so that we may elicit a discussion, and by that means get at the real root of the matter.

Let us commence at the very beginning and consider the case of each separate unit, battalion, battery, or whatever it may be.

As soon as war appears to be *imminent* efforts should be made to bring up the numbers of the unit to war strength by recruiting, locally, men who are fit and ready to serve.

In most cases in this country there will probably be, in the neighbourhood of each company or regimental head-quarters, a sufficient number of men who have *already served*, and who would be willing to rejoin. And such men, of course, being old soldiers, would generally be preferable to raw recruits.

To save trouble in hunting up suitable men I would suggest that the commanding officer of each company,

troop, or battery should keep during peace-time a "War-Service Roll," somewhat as follows :—

War Service Roll of No. 3 Company, 150th Battalion.

In the event of the Militia being called out for the defence of Canada, I undertake to serve in No 3 Company, 150th Battalion.

RANK.	NAME.	ADDRESS.	SIGNATURE.
Corporal ...	T. Atkins	P. O. London.	Thomas Atkins.
.....			
.....			

Then if occasion should arise a commanding officer would probably be able to lay his hand upon as many men as he needed at short notice.

And these men, on being notified by him, would join their companies at head quarters and would there have to be provided with a complete set of uniform, arms and equipment.

The commanding officer of each company should therefore be supplied with, and have always in hand, a stock of the above sufficient to complete his company to war strength, as it is no good enlisting men if you cannot equip them.

Every man, including those already serving, will also have to be furnished with various articles which are required in war but not in peace. Besides arms and equipment each man should be provided with the "necessaries" set forth in *Table I*.

These necessities would, in this country, probably have to be purchased locally, and I am not sure that the best way would not be for each man to procure them for himself, on the understanding that he will be given a reasonable allowance (say \$3) upon his kit passing a satisfactory inspection by his commanding officer.

Besides this equipment of the man, the unit itself now requires its own regimental equipment of many

articles which are necessary to enable it to move and fight, but which are in no way personal to the individual soldier.

Such stores are divided into two classes, styled respectively the *First Regimental Equipment* and the *Second Regimental Equipment*.

At first sight the simplest plan would seem to be to keep, during peace-time, all the stores required for war; at the head-quarters of each unit, so that they could be ready for issue whenever required. But this is not possible for two reasons:—

First.—On account of the expense.

Large store-houses would have to be built at each regimental head-quarters, store-keepers would have to be permanently paid and a great mass of stores, wagons, &c., would have to be purchased and laid by idle. In the present state of our finances this would not be justifiable.

Secondly.—If war should break out, there would be quite sufficient confusion and blockade upon the railways, without requiring them to transport, unnecessarily, huge masses of stores from various parts of the country to the "concentration places."

Therefore only such articles and supplies as are immediately required *i.e.* the "First Regimental Equipment," should be collected at the regimental head-quarters, and the bulkier articles, and those which would not be wanted until the unit actually took the field, *i.e.* the "Second Regimental Equipment," should be collected at the "Concentration Stations" by the district staffs.

The "First Regimental Equipment" consists chiefly of cooking utensils, butchery implements, intrenching tools, Artillery ammunition, etc., and the vehicles in which these are carried. (For detailed list see *Table II*.)

This equipment would have to be purchased locally by officers commanding units (not companies or troops), on the receipt of the order to mobilise, and to this end financial authority would have to be furnished them by the Militia Department, through the D.O.C. of the District.

The Transport, however, will probably all be *hired*, and Officers Commanding should make it their business during peace time to look around and keep a list of sufficient vehicles, with both horses and drivers, that would be immediately available in case of necessity. In fact

they might make some kind of conditional contract with local owners of transport and shopkeepers to furnish this "First Regimental Equipment" in case of war. A little previous understanding of this kind would save a great deal of confusion afterwards.

The "Second Regimental Equipment" consists chiefly of the mobilisation supply of ammunition, tents and blankets, and supply and ambulance wagons.

(For detailed list see *Table III.*)

This equipment would have to be collected at the main "Concentration Stations" by the officers commanding those stations and their staff.

It is presumed that the ammunition, tents and blankets will be already permanently stored at these Concentration Stations, and that all the District Officer Commanding will have to do will be to distribute them to the advanced parties of the various units as they arrive.

The question of transport, however, remains, and as usual it is the most difficult one.

The only solution I can see of the matter is this. District Officers Commanding should be furnished, in peace-time, with tables showing the exact number of horses and vehicles (including horses for divisional and brigade staffs), that would be required at each concentration station in case of war. With this list to guide him, the District Officer Commanding should prepare and keep a register of such horses and vehicles as would be readily available in case of need. (In order to meet all possible demands he should allow a margin of at least 50 per cent).

To assist him in carrying out this very important duty, I am strongly of the opinion that each District Officer Commanding should have permanently attached to his staff an officer, to be called the "District Transport Officer," who would be responsible for the proper registration and conditional engagement of all necessary and suitable transport, as previously detailed. (Horses should be separately classified as "riding" or "draught").

So much for the preliminary arrangements in time of peace, as far as we are concerned. Much more remains to be done, however, at Militia Headquarters, notably the preparation of detailed lists showing the composition of the various divisions, brigades, and detachments, and the names of the officers selected for their staffs.

This work, however, like the plan of campaign, is essentially the province of the chief military advisers of the Government, and for many and obvious reasons would be kept confidential till the last moment.

Let us now suppose that all the foregoing having been long worked out in time of peace, an emergency should arise, and the order to "Mobilise for war," should be telegraphed from Ottawa.

This order would be sent direct to officers commanding districts by the Adjutant General, who would at the same time despatch the already prepared and detailed tables of the exact distribution in the mobilisation scheme of each unit in the respective districts. These tables would also include full details of such divisions, brigades, etc., as had to be formed, together with their staffs.

Officers commanding districts, on receipt of the telegraphic order to mobilise would immediately notify officers commanding units by wire, and at once set about the collection and distribution of the "Second Regimental Equipment," and the arrangement of the camps or cantonments.

We will now pass on to *units* and first consider the case of a *City Corps*.

On receipt from the District Officer Commanding, of the order to mobilise, the officer commanding would at once :—

- (1.) Inform all officers and men, and recruit up to war strength.
- (2.) Arrange for a medical inspection of both officers and men. (The services of any who are found to be medically unfit to be at once dispensed with).
- (3.) Arrange for receiving, and accommodating in tents, hired buildings, or billets, men as they join. (Company officers would of course see that their men are supplied with "necessaries").
- (4.) Collect the "First Regimental Equipment" and its transport, detailing a horse party and a subaltern officer as "regimental transport officer" to see after the collection of the necessary horses and vehicles, and to allot the same for the various services required.
- (5.) Detail, and despatch to the "Concentration Station," the "advanced party" to draw the "Second Regimental Equipment" from the

District Officer Commanding and to have it ready for the unit on arrival.

- (6.) Engage, or arrange for, the railroad or other transport for the unit, complete with its "First Regimental Equipment," to the "Concentration Station."
- (7.) As soon as the unit is ready to start telegraph the fact to the District Officer Commanding.
- (8.) Proceed with the unit to the "Concentration Station" and be there joined by the "advanced party" who will have collected the "Second Regimental Equipment," and probably also pitched the camp.

The mobilisation of that unit would then be complete.

In the case of *rural corps*, the duties of officers commanding would be practically the same, except that each troop or company would be assembled and supplied with its personal outfit at the troop or company head-quarters.

As soon as this is effected, the troop or company would proceed to the regimental head-quarters with the least possible delay, and there receive its "First Regimental Equipment." (In very exceptional cases, troops or companies might be detailed for detached duty, or to proceed direct to the concentration station, without previously joining at the regimental head-quarters, but this should always be avoided if possible.)

In the case of artillery batteries, as they have the larger proportion of their ammunition always with them, no transport will have to be collected for them at the concentration stations beyond what is needed for the extra mobilisation ammunition.

On leaving its regimental head-quarters each unit would come under the immediate orders of the officer commanding the brigade, detachment, or other formation to which it is allotted in the mobilisation detail.

The problem of transport is, as I have said before, the most difficult and unsatisfactory one, and would in most cases have to be solved locally.

In the English service, as in most modern armies, regular military wagons are kept always ready in store, and are specially designed for the stores they have to carry. Such wagons are known as "general service," "artillery," "S.A.A." &c.

In this country, however, economy prohibits the provision and collection of such special transport, in time of peace, and when an emergency arises we shall have to use just such wagons as can be locally procured. It seems to me, however, that the ordinary four-wheel wagon of the country with two horses should be easily adaptable to almost all needs, and has a good capacity, (some 2,000 pounds.) This is a point, however, where local knowledge is of especial value, and I should be glad to elicit opinions as to the most suitable wagons that can be easily procured.

In fact any expressions of opinion on the question of transport, probable rates of hire, &c., will be very welcome, as my one object is to get at the actual truth. And in view of the fact that we are more than likely to be short of regular artillery ammunition wagons, I should be specially glad to know if artillery officers are agreed as to the best type of wagon to carry their heavy ammunition.

With reference to the *horses* required, I understand there would be no difficulty about hiring as many as would be necessary, but in England this is far from being the case. There, a method has been introduced, with success, of paying a small annual retaining fee to horse-owners, who then bind themselves by contract to sell the necessary horses *at a fixed rate* in case of war. There would probably be financial objections, however, to such a plan in this country.

One point I have not touched upon yet is the question of recruiting during the actual progress of hostilities, to meet wastage and to keep the regiments at the front up to strength.

A large number of recruits would be continually required, but there should be no difficulty about getting them, as public enthusiasm is usually stirred up during a national campaign and the best of the youth of the country would probably flock to the colors.

The question then arises : where should they flock to, and how are they to be equipped and trained after they have flocked ?

In England this training is all done by the permanent instructional staff at the various regimental depots, but there is, of course, nothing corresponding to these at the regimental head-quarters in this country.

The only feasible plan appears to be to constitute the present *permanent corps stations* as recruiting cen-

tres, and to accept only such men as present themselves there.

An instructional staff of officers and non-commissioned officers would then have to be detailed from the Permanent Corps to train the recruits as they came in, and although this duty might not be so popular or exciting as fighting at the front, it would be one of the most important and responsible that an officer could be called upon to perform.

Large reserves of clothing, arms, and equipment would have to be accumulated at these recruiting centres, and be kept at sufficient strength to meet all possible demands.

In the case of Infantry depots, the recruits would probably be formed into a "depot battalion" so as to receive a proper regimental training, and every effort would have to be made by the depot staff to equip men, and teach them the use of the rifle and the elements of drill, as rapidly as possible. Then as the campaign progressed, and as demands came from the front for fresh men, the best would be selected and sent forward as required.

I have now indicated, briefly and in outline, how the mobilisation and concentration of individual units would be carried out, and that is as far as it is necessary for us to follow the subject at present, as it is all that directly concerns regimental officers.

It must not be supposed, however, that what I have described completes the mobilisation of an army.

The great questions still remain of forming divisional and brigade staffs, ammunition columns, bearer companies and field hospitals, supply and ordnance store services, remount centres, military police, and other very large and important items. These, however, are more the concern of the Head-Quarters Staff, and in any case are far too complicated and lengthy to be dealt with in a lecture of this nature.

What I wish to particularly impress upon you is that the vital essence of any mobilisation scheme will be the practical details as carried out by officers commanding units, and I cannot too strongly impress upon them the enormous importance of the subjects which I have endeavoured to outline this evening.

Every officer should endeavour to picture in his mind all the little details and difficulties which are so inseparably connected with the mobilisation of even a company of infantry, and to grapple with and work

them out for his own command, *now, in time of peace*. Otherwise there will be inevitable confusion when war breaks out, and when weighed in the balance he will be found wanting.

In case Canada should be unfortunately involved in a contest with her great neighbour to the South, her chief military advantage would lie in the possibility of *swifter mobilisation*.

And this possibility is based upon the fact that the Canadian Militia is a homogeneous force, uniformly armed and equipped, and under the control of one central authority.

In the United States this is, as you know, very far from being the case, and this fact makes up very largely for our inferior numbers ; and it now lies in *your* hands whether this great national advantage shall be thrown away or retained and made the most of.

And for my concluding word let me repeat once more, and with all earnestness, the apparent truism :

"To be successful in war you must organise in peace."

ARTHUR H. LEE,
Captain, R.A.

APPENDIX.

N.B.—The following tables merely specify those articles which are considered absolutely necessary to enable units to take and keep the field. Further details, if required, are to be found in the "Equipment Regulations."

TABLE I.

"Necessaries," to be provided for each man.

1 pair canvas shoes.	1 cake of soap.
1 extra pair of socks.	1 comb.
1 flannel or flannelette shirt.	1 grease pot.
1 towel.	1 knife, fork and spoon.

TABLE II.

"First Regimental Equipment."

Cooking utensils :—

Camping kettles (12 quarts), 1 per 15 non-commissioned officers and men. 1 per 3 officers.

Butchery implements :—

Tenon saws,	*2 per battalion.
Meat choppers,	*2 do .
Butcher's knives (cutting),	*2 do
do (flaying),	*2 do
Butcher's steels,	*2 do
Steel-yards,	*2 do
Dressing hooks,	*8 do

(*For cavalry regiments and artillery batteries one-half these numbers still suffice.)

Intrenching tools, etc. :—

Spades, 30 per battalion, picks, 30 per battalion axes (felling), 2 per battalion.

(Artillery batteries only.) Ammunition at the rate of 160 rounds per gun, together with the necessary wagons to carry same, if not already in possession of batteries.

TABLE III.**"Second Regimental Equipment."***Mobilisation ammunition:—*

At the rate of 185 rounds per rifle, Infantry.

do 80 do per carbine, Cavalry.

do 140 do per gun, Artillery.

(In addition to the 160 pounds per gun in possession of batteries).

*Tents:—*1 per officer, 1 per 12 men.

*Blankets or Rubber Sheets:—*1 per man.

Ammunition carts:—

2 per battalion, Infantry.

1 per regiment, Cavalry.

Wagons:—

(Supply and ambulance), 4 per battalion, Infantry.

do 3 per regiment, Cavalry.

do 2 per Field Battery.

*Water Carts:—*1 per unit.

